

latter authors conclude from a series of nine necropsies, that "even in cases where neurites appear to be connected with initial alterations in the nervous centres, we have not found continuous alterations in the trunks between the cord and the altered nerves. Between the central alteration and the peripheral alteration the nervous trunks were healthy, and presented all the appearances of the normal condition."

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#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ASYLUM MANAGEMENT.

THE American politician is surely not a very enlightened person, yet he looms up grandly beside the theoretically non-partisan board of trustees of American idiot and insane asylums and the English justices of the peace who have similar functions in the British Isles. A well-known and able superintendent of an idiot asylum in Illinois, Dr. Wilbur, purchased supplies in open market at Chicago in lieu of buying them at the small town in which the asylum was situated. This was an offence against local interests not to be condoned, and the superintendent was forced to resign. All over the United States, especially in Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and Indiana, have similar performances occurred. Able superintendents have been turned out of office because they did not display a proper zeal for local interests. It is obvious that in this element there is a serious obstacle to progress in asylum management. The asylums erected by the State are made subsidiary to local tradesmen. To such an extent is the system of pandering to local prejudices carried, that corrupt means were taken to induce the commissioners, of an asylum to be erected, to locate the same in the vicinity of a small town in order to aid its development. The remedy for this was suggested by Comptroller Olcott some years ago, namely, the abolition of the local boards of trustees, and placing their functions in the hands of the State Boards of Charities. In England the local justices of the peace, whose unintellectual nature was ridiculed by Shakespeare, and has been the theme of ridicule ever since, are the chief authorities in the county asylums, and a

body of these specimens of petty authority turned out an able superintendent, Dr. Medlicott, because he protested against the bad laying of drains in the first place, and insisted on their repair in the second.

The American boards of trustees and the English justices deserve the same fate; both should vanish from the light of day. The latter are perhaps the worse, for they are responsible to nobody, not even to the central lunacy authorities, as long as they do not misuse or starve the patients.

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DELIBERATION AND CRIMES BY THE INSANE.

THE absurdity of the cant, so much prevalent even in professional circles, about deliberation being a test of sanity, is shown by a recent occurrence in Paris: "The attempted assassination of Dr. Rochard had a curious dénouement. Dr. Rochard received a letter in which the writer accused himself of the crime, and said that he had been urged to it by voices telling him to kill some one as the only way to change his ill-luck. He had wandered about all day, and at last had hidden behind a tree, and fired at Dr. Rochard as he would have fired at any one else who might have passed him. This strange letter was put into the hands of the police, and inquiries were begun, but the next day the writer delivered himself up to justice. His confession was found to be true in every respect, and a further discovery was made that he is a lunatic who had eloped from an asylum almost without resources a few days previous to his attempt upon Dr. Rochard." It is obvious that the auditory hallucinations leading to this crime were the secondary results of the patient's pondering his misfortunes. The idea of changing "ill-luck" by some unusual performance is very common among the lower classes, and ideas of this kind would be very readily transmuted into hallucinations. It is obvious also that the patient recognized the illegal nature of his act, and further, that he resisted for a relatively long period. His confession was prompted by the desire to relieve an innocent man from the burden of his crime.